DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 350 899 HE 025 875

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TITLE Peer Review of Teaching at UTK: An Assessment.
INSTITUTION Tennessee Univ., Knoxville. Learning Research Center.
PUB DATE 92
NOTE 26p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
JOURNAL CIT Teaching/Learning Issues; n70 Spr 1992

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Faculty; *College Instruction; Department Heads; Evaluation Methods; Higher Education; Learning Resources Centers; *Peer Evaluation; Program Evaluation; School Surveys; *Teacher Effectiveness; *Teacher Evaluation; Teacher Improvement; Teacher Response
IDENTIFIERS *University of Tennessee Knoxville

ABSTRACT

This report reviews the development of the peer review process at The University of Tennessee at Knoxville (UTK) and presents perceptions of the process after 1 year of implementation. The perceptions presented are from a survey of department heads and some faculty who had completed the peer review process. Responses included comments about the development of departmental guidelines, the funding of teaching research strategies, and ways of helping the instructor who is deemed to be inadequate. The report presents suggestions for improving the process as provided by these participants. Six conclusions from the survey are highlighted and briefly discussed: (1) the peer review process developed at UTK Knoxville reflects the current literature on the subject of faculty evaluation; (2) even though the mandated guidelines are minimal, they are not always properly adhered to; (3) the use of the results is unclear to most faculty and a source of great disquiet to some; (4) the rewards given for good teaching are generally viewed as grossly inadequate; (5) there is widespread support for the improvement of instruction on campus; and (6) there is a clear need for the administration to provide leadership in the support of the improvement of instruction. Contains 14 references. (GLR)

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No. 70 Spring 1992

ED350899

Teaching-Learning Issues

Peer Review of Teaching at UTK: An Assessment

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Prepared by the Learning Research Center/The University of Tennessee

This number of TEACHING/LEARNING ISSUES has been prepared by Thomas L. Bell (Department of Geography) and Tricia McClam (Department of Special Services Education). Professor Bell is Co-Chair of the Teaching Council of the Faculty Senate. Professor McClam is a member of both the Joint Senate/Chancellor's Committee on the Evaluation of Teaching and the Teaching Council of the Faculty Senate.

You cannot teach a man anything;
you can only help him to find it
within himself.

Galileo

Learning Research Center
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

There are no responsibilities more essential at an academic institution than teaching. Although few faculty have been trained as teachers, they are hired with the expectation that they will be effective instructors (Seldin, 1988). During the past decade emphasis on improving undergraduate education coupled with mandates for public accountability have focused attention on teaching, particularly the evaluation of instruction (Aleamoni, 1987; Arreola, 1987).

Unfortunately, for faculty, the subject of teaching evaluation is fraught with discomfort and distrust. There are several reasons for this. One is the perception that faculty evaluation is subjective and frequently void of built-in checks and balances. Added to this is the confusion about the use of the results: Who will have access to them, and how will they be used? Lack of a stable, focused body of evaluative criteria is another concern: What exactly will faculty be evaluated on, and who will evaluate? Belief that little value is placed on teaching by decision makers is also troubling. This belief is reinforced by an environment that offers few rewards and few opportunities for improvement. Finally, the past decade has seen a dramatic increase in the use of student evaluations. Many faculty believe an overreliance on this source turns teaching evaluation into a popularity contest. In spite of these reservations, teaching evaluation is a fact of life in most institutions of higher education today, and faculty concerns continue to exist.

At the core of every teaching evaluation program is the purpose which guides the structure of the process: the questions that are asked, the sources of information that are tapped, and the way in which data are analyzed (Seldin, 1984). *Summative evaluation* is conducted for administrative decisions such as pay increases and promotion and tenure deliberations while *formative evaluation* is designed to improve teaching. Some types of data are useful for one purpose or the other. Classroom observation is one example.

General agreement exists in the literature that classroom observation is useful only if the evaluated faculty member invites a peer to look for specific problems for purposes of teaching improvement. It is not particularly useful in providing information about overall effectiveness because most observations lack validity and reliability (Yanners & Tampas, 1986).

Summative faculty evaluation is a complex matter that has relied increasingly on student evaluations (Andrews, 1985; Aleamoni, 1987; Centra, 1987; Cohen, 1980; Cohen & McKeachie, 1980). There is recognition, however, that comprehensive and effective instructional evaluation systems for personnel decisions consist of several components, one of which is peer review. With varying degrees of success, the involvement of colleagues in the evaluation of instruction ranges from informal conversations to reviews of instructional materials to classroom observations (Braskamp, Brandenburg, & Ory, 1984; Centra, 1986; Cohen & McKeachie, 1980; French-Lazovik, 1976; Grasha, 1977; Skoog, 1980; Yanners & Tampas, 1986). Agreement exists among Centra (1987), French-Lazovik (1976), Seldin (1984) and others that a successful peer review process should be used in conjunction with other methods and should meet the following criteria:

1. Faculty develop and accept a process;
2. Peers will rate only the dimensions they are competent to rate;
3. The process is tied to efforts for recognition, reward, and improvement; and
4. Mechanisms are included for the evolution of the process.

The purpose of this *Teaching-Learning Issues* is to review the development of the peer review process at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville and to present perceptions of the process after one year of implementation. During the 1990-91 academic year, the Teaching Council of the Faculty Senate surveyed department heads and some faculty who had completed the peer review process. Those results are presented here.

Development of the Process

In 1985, joint action by the Faculty Senate and the Office of the Provost at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville created the Committee to Evaluate Instruction. The charge to the committee was to develop a "better means of evaluating teaching, including areas such as advising which are parts of the teaching commitment." Serving on the committee were Gary Schneider, Chair

(Agriculture); Henry Frandsen (Mathematics); Dottie Habel (Art); Anne Hopkins (Academic Affairs); Marcia Katz (Nuclear Engineering); Marian Moffett (Architecture); John Morrow (History); Ellie Moses (Social Work); Jay Stauss (Human Ecology); and Bert Welker (Student Representative). In its final report in October 1987, the committee presented a number of observations which are congruent with the literature on peer review. Influencing its recommendations were the following points: 1) faculty perceive that teaching is undervalued in promotion and tenure decisions; 2) policies and procedures clear and acceptable to the majority of faculty are needed; 3) there needs to be a direct link between performance evaluation, and rewards; 4) a primary reason for evaluating teaching is to provide information for sound personnel decisions; 5) successful evaluation of teaching should be coupled with means for improvement; 6) multiple sources of information should be used to assess both teaching and knowledge of subject matter; and 5) peer review is appropriate to evaluate "knowledge of the subject, course objectives, assignments, examinations, and contributions to departmental teaching efforts." The committee made the following final recommendations which were approved by the Faculty Senate and the Provost:

- The teaching performance of all faculty, regardless of their academic rank or tenure status, must be subject to rigorous and thorough review.
- The required evaluation of teaching must have two major components, student surveys and peer reviews.
- Details of the required assessment of teaching effectiveness should be drawn up by a Senate-Provost committee and brought back to the Senate for approval prior to implementation.

The Senate-Provost Teaching Evaluation Implementation Committee was appointed and charged with designing the two components of evaluation, peer review and student surveys, as well as developing guidelines for the use of the information generated. Chaired by Marian Moffett (Architecture), committee members were William Bull (Chemistry); Edwin Burdette (Civil Engineering); Henry Frandsen (Mathematics); Dottie Habel (Art); Anne Hopkins (Academic Affairs); Anne Mayhew (Economics); R. Baxter Miller (English); Carl Pierce (Law) and Tom Ladd (Management). In 1989, the committee presented a peer review process that was adopted by the Faculty Senate and implemented during the spring semester 1990. Believing that peer review is most appropriately used to evaluate the instructor's knowledge of the subject, course

objectives, assignments, examinations, and contributions to departmental teaching efforts, the process directs faculty peers to inspect and evaluate an array of course material while encouraging departments to define additional evidence of teaching quality that is germane to their particular discipline. Guidelines direct the selection of a three-member team of faculty peers, the selection of courses for review, the criteria for evaluation, and the submission of a written report.

Instructions to department heads regarding the implementation of peer review emphasize the critical role the department head plays in the evaluation process. The careful analysis of the data received to determine teaching performance as well as establishing a climate for evaluation are part of the department head's responsibilities. Specifically, the department head establishes the peer review schedule in the department, sees that a policy explaining the details of peer review is written and distributed to all faculty, appoints the chair for each peer review team, and assists faculty in preparing for the review. Finally, it is the department head's responsibility to interpret the final report of the team, using this information in concert with other data to determine whether the instructor's teaching is outstanding, competent or inadequate. Department heads are cautioned about the possibility of faculty biases affecting peer reviews.

Faculty participate in the peer review process in two ways. As the subject of peer review, faculty prepare for committee review an array of course material, including syllabi, examinations, assignments and other written materials. They will also select one other faculty member as a member of the peer review team.

Secondly, as part of a peer review team, tenured faculty serve as members or chairs, reviewing the portfolio and submitting a written evaluation of the materials submitted. Three questions guide the review:

- Is the material appropriate for the course being taught?
- Are methods used for student evaluation fair, appropriate, and well executed?
- Is the general quality of the material satisfactory?

In answering these questions, the committee reaches agreement about the quality of the portfolio as outstanding, competent, or inadequate.

Faculty also serve as members of a joint Senate/Chancellor's Committee on the Evaluation of Teaching, a committee recommended by the 1985 Committee to Evaluate Instruction. The charge to this committee is to monitor the evaluation process,

consider any other aspects of teaching evaluation as may arise, and recommend any modifications of the teaching evaluation policy to the Senate and the Chancellor. At the present time, the following individuals serve on this committee: Marian Moffett, Chair (Architecture); William Bull (Chemistry); Henry Frandsen (Mathematics); John Graveel (Plant and Soil Science); Tricia McClam (Education); Ralph Norman (Academic Affairs); Wayman Scott (Engineering); and Richard Wirtz (Law).

An Evaluation of the Process

Because a number of concerns have been expressed throughout the University about the peer review process, the Teaching Council, a committee of the UT Knoxville Faculty Senate, investigated the process after a year of implementation. The following questions guided the study:

- Is the process viewed as a fair one by the faculty being evaluated?
- What elements of the teaching process are actually examined?
- Do the faculty who have been evaluated and the department heads to whom the reports are submitted have suggestions for the improvement of the process?

The first stage of the investigation was to query department heads about their reactions to the mandated process and to ascertain from them a list of faculty in their departments who had already participated in the peer review process. The second stage was to query those faculty so identified about their reaction to and experience with the process. The response rate from both groups was high. Approximately 50% of all department heads responded as well as administrators in the Colleges of Law, Architecture and Planning, and Nursing. They identified 139 faculty members who had completed the peer review process. Almost half (68) of those faculty members provided their perspective on the process. Many others noted that they were still in the process of being evaluated during the academic term the survey was received and could not, therefore, gauge their reaction until the process was completed.

Department heads responded to a 12 item survey that included items on the adoption of departmental guidelines more specific than those mandated by the University, priorities about who will be evaluated, the materials required for committee examination, the role of classroom visitation, resources for improvement, and suggestions for improving the process.

Faculty members responded to a survey that asked about their experience with the process, their beliefs about the peer review of teaching, and suggestions for improving both the process and instruction.

Responses from Department Heads

Seven of the twenty-seven departments and colleges included in the survey had separate departmental/college guidelines which differed from those of the University. Two of the seven included copies of their written guidelines with the returned survey form. The Faculty Development Committee within the Department of Psychology has formulated a proposed assessment model entitled "Pathways of Faculty Development." The Department of Psychology realizes that their proposed model is labor-intensive and may not be practical in their large department, but it represents an attempt at thoughtful reflection on the peer review process.

The Role of Classroom Visitation

The question that raised the greatest degree of controversy on the questionnaire was that pertaining to classroom visitation. One department head was especially insistent about the importance of classroom visitation. He noted that it is "ludicrous to review teaching and never see the teacher in action." That department, therefore, has mandated that each member of the peer review team visit separately the classroom of the instructor being evaluated at least three times during the term. Interestingly and courageously, that department head is among the first three instructors in that department to be evaluated.

Many other department heads or their designates who responded to the questionnaire survey felt the same way about the efficacy of classroom visitation. In fact, of the 26 usable responses on the issue of classroom visitation, 13 (50%) encouraged visitation, and five others responded that it was optional with the committee. On the other hand, eight others said that classroom observation was not encouraged.

This is obviously a divisive issue, and there are strongly held opinions on both sides. Those who favored visitation suggested it was "absolutely necessary to evaluate teaching," and that the "procedures (or classroom observation) yield an interesting picture of instructor's teaching style and student response to this style." Assessment of the "learning atmosphere" was frequently cited as a benefit of visitation, and one person suggested that it "enhanced the evaluators' capacity to do a thorough job." The consensus of those who favor classroom visitation is summarized by the

following two comments: "Written materials alone cannot convey the quality of student-faculty interaction" and "review of (written) materials is only going through the motions (of faculty evaluation)."

Those who did not favor classroom visitation generally fell into one of two camps—those who opposed it on pragmatic grounds and those who were opposed to it on the grounds that it was, in some way, unfair to the instructor. Comments of the former type included "it (classroom visitation) is a burden for a large understaffed department."

Opposing comments included the following: "the faculty feel it would be a 'dog and pony show' "; "we feel that spot evaluations would be unsatisfactory and too much observation would be a burden"; "visitors to the classroom are viewed as changing dynamics somewhat; thus one-class observation may not give an accurate portrayal of the total semester or even of overall style." The college most opposed to classroom visitation appears to be the College of Education. Perhaps department heads in this college are familiar with educational research that does not support its use in summative evaluation, the ostensible purpose of UT Knoxville's mandated process (see page 4).

Examination of written materials

Few departments/programs use a written statement of the teaching philosophy of the instructor being evaluated (only 20% did so). On the other hand, practically every department/program surveyed used course syllabi and examinations. Slightly fewer peer review committees examined student evaluations of the courses taught (about 80%).

Committees examined a myriad of other written materials. Over 30% of the responding departments/programs examined course handouts. A few departments suggest looking at student grade distributions, and others recommend that some evidence of student work/outcomes be included. This latter requirement appears especially important in programs which emphasize studio or practicum experiences. Reading material is also examined by some departments/programs as well as audio-visual materials used in the classroom.

Two departments require that the review committee hold an interview with the instructor being evaluated, and one department interviews a small sample of former students as to the instructor's perceived effectiveness in the classroom.

Response to the Process as Experienced

The response to the Likert-type scale of reaction to the process as experienced to date showed that most respondents were

neutral (i.e., a response of 3 on a five-point scale). The respondents were more positive than negative, however, as values of 4 and 5 (positive experiences) outnumbered values of 2 and 1 by a ratio of 2:1. One department head rated the experience with the process low because "assessment does not improve teaching."

The Development of Departmental Guidelines

Few departments/programs have guidelines for the composition of the peer review teams that differ from those suggested by the process adopted by the Faculty Senate. The gist of the additional requirements in four of the five departments/programs that have developed specific selection guidelines, is to assure that an "outsider" (i.e., a dispassionate, impartial observer) was included as a member of the team. The "outsider" can simply be a person in another programmatic area within the same department, a person outside the department but within the college or, in two cases, an extracollegiate colleague. The fifth department required that all of the evaluators come from within the department, counter to the generally perceived need to "open up" the process.

There are also examples of departures from the suggested guidelines governing peer review. One department violated the original guidelines of the joint Senate/Chancellor Committee by assigning two-person peer review committees. One of the two members was selected from among tenured members of a standing departmental committee on faculty development, and the other was chosen by the instructor being evaluated. Likewise, it is uncommon for several instructors from the same department to be evaluated by the same peer review evaluation team. But such has been the practice in some departments, especially when several instructors are being evaluated in the same academic term.

Ways to Help the Instructor Who is Deemed "Inadequate"

Remediation of faculty deemed "inadequate" as a result of the peer review process proved to be an area where guidelines are needed. One department head even pleaded that the Teaching Council should "come up with some recommendations for this."

The first logical step seems to be counseling with the peer review committee and the department head. Several mentioned that the annual MBO (management by objective) conferences may be the appropriate time to suggest remediation alternatives but that it is difficult to get some tenured faculty members to change their *modus operandi* even when threatened with monetary sanctions (e.g. lower than average salary increases).

Some suggested imposing sanctions such as denial of tenure for "inadequate" teaching among the untenured professors in the

department and zero merit raises for those with tenure. Others suggested more positive interventions such as pairing the faculty member deemed inadequate with a mentor considered to be an excellent teacher in order to learn the craft from those who perform it best. Mentoring with respect to teaching is evidently widely practiced now across a variety of departments.

One department allows the instructor deemed inadequate by the peer review team to prepare a formal rebuttal to the charges. While this may appear a bit formalistic, it is fair given the suggested importance of teaching adequacy to promotion, tenure, and merit raise decisions. Many departments felt that the problem of inadequate teaching must be considered on a case-by-case basis (i.e., there is no magic formula that would work well across the board).

The Perceived Role of the Learning Research Center

Suggesting that the instructor seek help from the Learning Research Center (LRC), while generally applauded, was not without its detractors. Those who hesitated to suggest the LRC as a viable source of remedial help seemed to feel that LRC did not have content specialists available who understood the special teaching requirements in their discipline and that remediation would be better handled within the confines of the department. As one department head put it, outside help should be sought "only if the person had a sense of the nature of the discipline and the various ways it might best be taught." This was a sentiment especially felt about studio courses where a "different teaching methodology was required." Others expressed concern about the "efficacy of such measures" (i.e., suggesting that the instructor seek help from the LRC). Some were not sure what array of services the LRC offered.

Funding Teaching Improvement Strategies

Should monies be allocated for the improvement of teaching? Department heads responded with a resounding, but qualified, "yes." The qualification expressed by most department heads is, not surprisingly, the sad shape of departmental operating funds and budgets in general. Many respondents said they support the idea in principle, but only if the financial backing for the effort came from new monies. One suggested that a private endowment might be approached with the idea of providing money for teaching improvement.

There seems to be no consensus about the implementation of measures designed to improve teaching. One department felt the money should not be spent on "projects that sound good but do not accomplish much." A second department head expressed an even

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more cynical view: "it is doubtful that monies for this purpose would be well spent." Another department felt it was at least as important to devote financial resources to the improvement of research as to the improvement of teaching: "Our faculty have as many questions about how one becomes involved in the research enterprise as in teaching."

A few departments were in favor of the allocation of monies to improve teaching only if these new funds were given directly to the departments. Others qualified their support dependent upon the conditions under which the funds could be used and the administrative guidelines that might be developed to govern their disbursement.

Suggestions for Improving the Process.

The final question asked of the department heads was an open ended one—do you have any specific suggestions for the improvement of the peer review process or teaching in general? The responses were varied and intriguing. What follows is a sample of opinions and ideas:

- We feel that an effective form of feedback to an instructor requires in-depth knowledge of that person's view of the course and that person's intended teaching style.
- I believe that classroom visits should be required of the evaluation committee. (Three responses)
- I sadly fear that we may overtax the willingness of the tenured faculty to staff these teams, but it is hard for us to imagine how a peer review system worth having can operate without class visitations.
- Try correlating grades in classes and student evaluation. Measure how much students learn from an instructor by correlating grades in a course with the grades received by a student in subsequent dependent courses.
- Drop the system. It is another time waster. We are constantly evaluated. This system of peer evaluation is a response to political pressure and does not enjoy widespread support. On the contrary—it breeds cynicism.
- Allow each department to refine its approaches without too heavy a hand from procedures set in concrete from people who assume all teaching is lecture/lab style. Most of the arts are one-on-one where personality and individualization are key to success.
- It would be interesting to know whether other departments are as serious about the process as we.

- I would suggest that departments submit a teaching evaluation package to the University and let *them* (i.e., administrators) go about it.
- I would welcome more specific instructions and would especially welcome suggestions for follow-up and for how to work with those who need help.
- Take pains to avoid duplication in the types of surveys conducted.
- Expand the categories for the rating; three is too narrow.
- I suggest that a cadre of excellent teachers be formed to assist inadequate teachers. Selection to this cadre should be based on demonstrated performance and be limited by renewable terms. They should receive extra service pay and have been trained in the clinical observation model by College of Education faculty.
- Quoting from a faculty member about his or her experience with the peer evaluation process as currently practiced: "The most difficult part is arriving at an evaluative conclusion—one word—that labels his/her teaching (and only based upon materials at that). If this is an evaluation assessment, it should be done by administrators. If it is diagnostic, then a list of strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement would make sense. What we *don't* need is a more meticulous, detailed review process. What we *do* need is a simplified, helpful process that will assist us in becoming better teachers without pitting us against each other while doing so."

Responses from Faculty

The department heads/program administrators who responded to the first survey identified 139 instructors who had undergone the peer review process. A second survey asked this group about the process as they experienced it. Specifically, the survey addressed the selection of committee members, the materials reviewed, and classroom observation. Participants were also asked about their beliefs about peer review and their suggestions for improving the process. The response rate to this survey (49%) was high and indicated a keen interest in peer review. The responses represented a broad sampling of faculty across all academic ranks and all colleges. What follows is a brief summary of their responses.

The Peer Review Experience

The great majority of the respondents (70%) had peer review committees composed of members of their own departments. To the question about whether the person was allowed to select which course(s) should be evaluated, an equal number responded affirmatively and negatively. Most of those who responded negatively felt the courses for evaluation were chosen simply because they were the only ones being taught or were those most recently completed. The choice was viewed by most as a pragmatic response to hurry the process along.

The majority of respondents were able to decide upon the materials to be included in their own portfolio. Of the fifteen who responded that they were not given such an opportunity, seven suggested that the department had not developed guidelines as to what could or could not be included in such a portfolio. Everyone who was evaluated shared course syllabi with the peer evaluation committee. Almost everyone did the same with course examinations and assignments. The least frequently supplied materials included, in ascending order of frequency, letters of support and/or testimonials from former students, grade distributions within the course(s) being taught, audio-visual materials utilized, and statements of teaching philosophy.

About an equal number of instructors did and did not receive classroom visits from peer review members as part of their evaluation. Even within departments, the use of classroom visitation was variable. Those whose evaluation included classroom visitations were, for the most part, given prior notification of the visitation date(s). One department specified that the reviewers were to visit three separate class meetings, but one visit appears to be the norm among the departments/programs that encourage or require classroom visitation.

The procedures for peer review are by no means uniform across campus. The majority of the respondents (62%) did not meet with their committee per se prior to the evaluation. This prompted some to comment that they wished they had included more written materials in their portfolio, but were unaware they could do so. Mandating a preliminary meeting to set the "ground rules" for the evaluation would overcome some the of the uncertainty presently experienced.

When asked whether they met with their committee during the course of the evaluation process, a majority of those who did not do so at the beginning also did not do so subsequently. Many responded that they did not feel the need to do so. Likewise, a majority (69%) did not meet with the committee after the evaluation

process terminated though some commented that they met informally with selected committee members. About an equal number who did not meet with the committee members after the evaluative process did, in fact, receive a "de-briefing" and/or a copy of the written report from their department heads.

An overwhelming percentage of the respondents (91%) thought that the peer review process was fair and unbiased. Many commented that they really gained much from peer review committees that took their job seriously and produced a useful critical assessment.

There was, however, an undercurrent of disquiet expressed about the purpose the process was supposed to serve. A few evaluatees noted that more verbiage in their reports was spent on the problems inherent in the review process than on suggestions for the improvement of their own instruction.

Beliefs about Peer Review

Participants responded to statements about peer review using a Likert-type response scale (Table 1). A response of 4 or 5 was judged to be favorable to the issue involved. Likewise, a response of 1 or 2 was judged to be unfavorable. A response of 3 was judged to be neutral or ambivalent.

Most respondents agreed that peer review was both necessary and important (57%). And, by an even greater margin (68%), they felt that classroom observation should be a necessary component of the process. This was the case even though less than half had actually been observed in the classroom setting by their peer review committee members.

A slight majority felt that the current tripartite classification was inadequate to properly summarize the evaluatee's teaching. Few thought that that the current guidelines for peer review were unfair, but many were either neutral on this issue (45%) or were uncertain about the nature of the guidelines even though copies had been distributed to every faculty member by the Chancellor's Office.

Practically everyone responding to the survey (92%) felt strongly that instructors deemed "inadequate" should be helped, but there was slightly less support for the allocation of funds to implement intervention or remediation measures.

The questions about teaching per se reveal a great deal about the psyche of the typical college professor. No one rated himself or herself a"'poor" teacher. In fact, only 11% even saw themselves as merely "adequate." All of the rest thought they were "good" to "excellent" teachers.

Table 1

Belief Statements About Peer Review

1. I think the peer evaluation of teaching as currently implemented at UTK is necessary and important.
2. I think it is important for the peer evaluation team to visit the classroom to observe teaching firsthand.
3. I think that the three categories of evaluation (i.e., "outstanding," "competent," "inadequate") are sufficient for the purposes the peer evaluation is intended to serve.
4. I think the operational guidelines developed by the Joint Chancellor-Faculty Senate Committee on Teacher Evaluation are fair and unbiased.
5. I think that teachers who are categorized as "inadequate" as a result of the peer evaluation process should be offered help to improve their teaching.
6. Despite budget problems, I would be willing to see financial resources expended on intervention measures to improve the quality of teaching on campus.
7. I would be willing to participate in a course/seminar designed specifically for college teachers to discuss teaching issues and to help improve my own teaching.
8. I consider myself a good teacher.
9. I wish that I had been offered the opportunity for more training in teaching methods and pedagogy within the context of my own advanced degree program.
10. I feel equally well qualified to teach a small group of students in a seminar, laboratory/studio format and a larger group in a lecture or lecture/discussion format.
11. I feel more attention should be paid to teaching at UTK.
12. I feel that good teaching is being adequately rewarded at UTK.

Perhaps because of this overwhelming prevailing attitude, only about one-third of the respondents expressed a real interest in participating in seminars/workshops on the improvement of instruction. There is typically a non-commitment bias in surveys that

ask only about hypothetical expenditures of time or resources: many more respond affirmatively than will actually participate. The number of participants in the planned fall semester workshops on teaching jointly sponsored by the Teaching Council, the Learning Research Center, the College of Education, and Academic Affairs may, therefore, be small.

As many respondents felt that more emphasis on pedagogical training in their own fields of endeavor would have been unnecessary as those who said they would have found such an emphasis useful. The overwhelming majority of the respondents (73%) felt they were as adroit in front of a large lecture class as they were when leading a small group discussion. Statements 11 and 12 generated predictable responses. The overwhelming majority felt more attention should be devoted to the teaching function (59%) or were satisfied with the current level of attention being placed on teaching at Tennessee (35%). But, the bulk of the respondents felt that inadequate rewards are currently being bestowed on good teachers (68%).

Suggestions for Improvement

The open ended responses were extremely revealing. They demonstrate a great depth of concern about the perceived lack of acknowledgement of good teaching. They suggest as well some innovative and thoughtful ideas about how to rectify the situation.

What follows is a sampling of those responses. Some of them conflict and others are complementary. No attempt has been made to evaluate their merits; this is simply a sampling of opinion on some controversial, and perhaps unresolvable, issues.

- It would be more useful to send me to the classes of teachers who have been acknowledged as excellent in order that I might be able to pick up some pointers I could incorporate in my own teaching, rather than to have members of a peer evaluation committee observe my classes.
- I need help on how to integrate computers into the classroom.
- The quality of classrooms varies dramatically over the campus, and this contributes to the quality of the learning experience.
- More team and co-teaching would be desirable.
- There is a need for a cadre of knowledgeable, trained listeners who are not close colleagues in order to help those who desire it so that they may seek their own solutions for instructional improvement.

- A probationary year (similar to what's required at the pre-collegiate level) would be desirable for new faculty with careful supervision by a designated faculty mentor.
- Faculty should be interviewed about their philosophy of teaching.
- Teaching evaluation should differentiate between required and elective courses.
- Research-active faculty should be encouraged to view both teaching and research as strands in the fabric of scholarship.
- Standardized grading procedures should be employed at Tennessee.
- Peer evaluation should be judged either "satisfactory" or "not satisfactory" on a *variety* of teaching criteria—course preparation, presentation of content, development and evaluation of assignments, etc.
- Departments should customize the peer review procedures to make the concept fit with the format, traditions and expectations unique to that unit.
- Courses being taught for the first time should not be evaluated.
- Evaluation should be completed by a cadre of professional evaluators using videotaping of classroom performance.
- Teaching workshops should be structured such that participants actually develop materials and demonstrate their use.
- Simply have faculty identify the "bad" teachers in their department.
- Evaluate *all* teaching faculty every two years.
- Continue the brown bag program (i.e., the Celebration of Teaching) to disseminate and discuss teaching approaches and "tricks of the trade."
- Do not limit *a priori* the percentage of instructors who can be judged "Outstanding." Such is a ploy by the administration to keep from recognizing and rewarding excellence in teaching.
- Money for workshops on the improvement of teaching would be better spent on A/V and laboratory equipment to improve classroom instruction.
- Too much emphasis has been placed on the evaluation of undergraduate *vis-a-vis* graduate instruction.

- Do away with the mandatory student evaluation of instruction and reallocate that money to fund 25 annual teaching awards of $2,000 each.
- Evaluate tenured faculty less often than once every five years because you "can't teach an old dog new tricks" anyway.
- Develop a mechanism for establishing teaching professorships that is analogous to research professorships.
- It is doubtful that the peer evaluation process has uncovered anyone who is not already known as a poor teacher.
- The peer review process runs the risk of setting colleagues at odds with each other.
- Faculty who refuse to be observed in the classroom should be treated like those who refuse a breathalyzer test—presumed to have something to hide.
- Teaching competence ought to be respected as well as honoring teaching excellence.
- Professors must be forced to act less selfishly. Dock their pay or fire them if they get poor student evaluations. Publish those student evaluations in the *Daily Beacon*.

Obviously, faculty members do not speak with a single voice. There is, however, a general feeling that teaching is important, but is not being recognized and rewarded as such by administrators. There is also a feeling that much of the peer review process is merely "going through the motions" and that inadequate teaching is not being punished any more than excellence in teaching is being rewarded. Faculty from small or especially open departments feel they already know (mostly from student feedback) who the bad and the good instructors are in their departments. But, punitive or corrective measures have not been taken with the former, and merit raises have not been given to the latter. A clear statement issued by the administration on the purpose(s) peer review is meant to serve would be most welcome.

Conclusions

It is difficult to generalize about, much less, summarize, results of surveys that engendered such disparate and heart-felt opinions from those who responded. Nonetheless, six conclusions will be highlighted in turn: 1) the peer review process developed at UT Knoxville reflects the current literature on the subject of faculty evaluation; 2) even though the mandated guidelines are

minimal, they are not always properly adhered to; 3) the use of the results is unclear to most faculty and a source of great disquiet to some; 4) the rewards given for good teaching are generally viewed as grossly inadequate; 5) there is widespread support for the improvement of instruction on campus; and 6) there is a clear need for the administration to provide leadership in the support of the improvement of instruction.

Degree to which Peer Review at UT Knoxville Reflects Accepted Educational Practices

The peer review process developed at UT Knoxville does reflect the characteristics suggested in the educational literature for sound evaluative practice. The process is a form of summative evaluation used for administrative decisions on promotion, tenure and merit pay. As such, classroom visitation need not be mandated. Peer review committees consist of three persons, as the literature suggests, although the degree to which committee members limit themselves to dimensions of teaching they are competent to evaluate is unknown. A large number of faculty were involved with the development, approval and implementation of the process. There is enough flexibility in the process to allow "customization" for particular teaching and disciplines. There is room for improvement to the process. Experience with the process will, it is hoped, lead to more streamlined and effective evaluative procedures.

Degree to which Procedures Are Being Followed

The manner in which peer review is supposed to operate at UT Knoxville is viewed by most faculty as fair and reasonable. There are, however, a few departments that have not followed the guidelines. In addition, there are some faculty who claim they have not been given adequate information to prepare materials for peer review. Nor have some faculty been given the opportunity to meet with their peer review committee to discuss the ground rules for evaluation beforehand and/or to be debriefed about the results of the evaluation afterwards. A statement from the administration clarifying the underlying philosophy and purpose(s) peer review is to serve is sorely needed to accompany the statement of mechanical procedures by which peer review is to be accomplished.

Use of the Peer Review Results

The greatest unknowns for faculty regarding peer review are the uses to which the results will be put. It is not at all clear to faculty how the results of peer review are factored into decisions regarding tenure, promotion and merit raises. Nor is it clear to faculty who, besides themselves, the peer review committee and

the department head, has access to the committee's report. Given the importance of the decisions that hinge, in part, on peer review, it is incumbent upon the administration to clarify the use of these results. There is, for example, a widespread rumor circulating that prespecified percentages of faculty will fall into each of the three evaluative categories (i.e. "outstanding," "competent," "inadequate"). More openness about the process would alleviate much consternation on the part of faculty.

Inadequacy of Rewards for Good Teaching

There is a widespread feeling among the faculty that the teaching mission at the University is undervalued by the administration. Even highly visible recognition such as the National Alumni Association teaching awards are viewed with cynicism by some. Clearly, much more should be done to recognize excellence in teaching at UT Knoxville. This recognition need not necessarily be of a pecuniary nature. Faculty and administration need to create an atmosphere where good teaching is expected, fostered and rewarded.

Attention to the Improvement of Instruction

The greatest unanimity of opinion in the surveys was expressed in support of improvement of instruction. Though almost every one felt that improvement of the teaching at UT Knoxville was necessary, there was no accord on how to reach this laudable goal. Many felt that the Learning Research Center (LRC) should play a vital role in this effort toward instructional improvement.

The magnitude of the task is, however, beyond the resources of the LRC. Given the current budgetary woes of the University, it is unlikely that monies for teaching improvement can be found from existing sources. Some suggested that a private foundation or public agency might be approached with a proposal to improve the overall quality of instruction. Others suggested the answer might be found within the existing resources of the University. A cadre of excellent teachers might, for example, be trained to disseminate techniques for instructional improvement. Likewise, thought might be given to formalizing the practice of peer mentoring with respect to teaching. Despite some opinion to the contrary, every faculty member can improve aspects of his or her teaching, and all faculty should be targeted in these efforts, not just those deemed "inadequate" by the peer review process.

Leadership From the Administration

Finally, the results of the surveys reveal a deeply felt need among the faculty for administrative leadership in the area of teaching improvement. The more cynical respondents imply that administrators do nothing but pay lip service to the importance of effective teaching while being niggardly in the allocation of resources for teaching improvement.

It is time for faculty and administrators to become less adversarial and more open about the purposes of faculty evaluation. A clear statement of evaluation objectives and a concrete program of action for teaching improvement would go far to combat the malaise that seems to have befallen the campus with regard to this important issue.

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